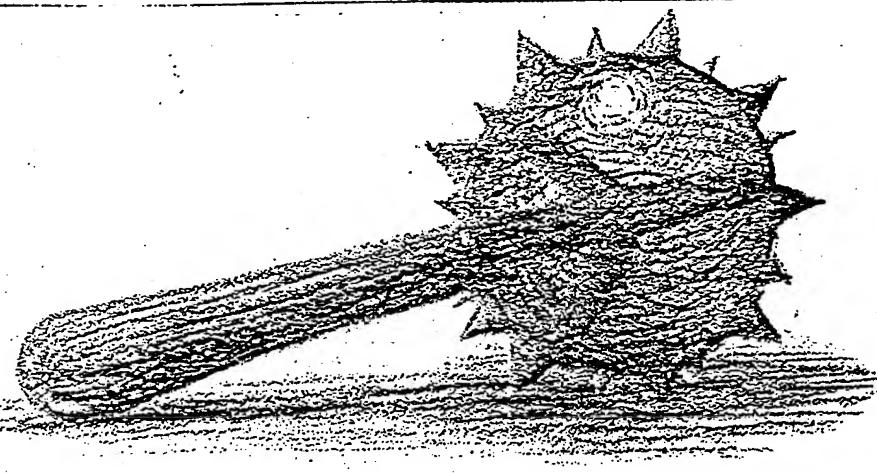


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ON PAGE 18~~

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## WASHINGTON

# THE VIETNAM GENERATION

*The skirmish over a presidential nomination reveals the chasm between those who fought and those who stayed home*



THOMAS PAUKEN IS a thirty-seven-year-old lawyer from Dallas. As a student at Georgetown University in the 1960s, he was active in conservative politics, and in 1965 he became the national chairman of the College Republicans. In the 1970s, after serving in the Army in Vietnam and completing law school at Southern Methodist University, he became active in Dallas politics and ran twice as a Republican for the congressional seat held by Representative Jim Mattox, losing narrowly both times. Early this year, Thomas Pauken became President Reagan's nominee to run ACTION, the federal agency that oversees a number of volunteer programs, including, in an indirect way, the Peace Corps.

The Senate confirmed Pauken's nomi-

nation by a voice vote on May 7, but only after a portentous struggle. It was often said during the Senate hearings on Alexander Haig's appointment as secretary of state that arguments about his fitness were really continuations of old arguments about Watergate. To a significant degree, the controversy over Pauken was a resumption of disagreements about Vietnam. Although the Pauken case is settled, the divisions it revealed imply that, unlike Watergate, Vietnam may be a source of more, not less, friction in coming years.

Nothing in Pauken's appearance suggested his vulnerability as a nominee. He is a square-faced man of medium height and build, with orderly black hair and a salesman's ready smile. Seen in his offices at ACTION during the controversy over his appointment, he seemed to be a classic specimen of the enthusiastic movers and self-improvers who have always made up the Republican Party's greatest pool of young talent. He was a success in the law before turning to politics; he did his part for Dallas, through the United Way and other volunteer groups. He is happily married and is the father of five children, the oldest of whom is six; he has an honorable record of military service. The last was the problem.

The complaint against Pauken turned on the choices he had made during the Vietnam War. Pauken volunteered for the Army early in 1967 and served for nearly three years. Throughout that period he was an officer in Army intelligence. He spent most of his first two years in training—at the Army's intelligence school, at Ft. Holabird, Maryland, then at language school in El Paso, then again at Ft. Holabird. Early in 1969, he went to Vietnam, where he began as a "province intelligence officer" in the Mekong Delta and later became a "senior analyst" with the Strategic Research and Analysis division in Saigon. While he was stationed in the delta, his work consisted of collecting "order of battle" information—specific reports about the nature of troops and equipment that enemy forces possessed. In Saigon, he prepared research reports on subjects such as communist revolutionary strategy and the North Vietnamese theorist Truong Chinh.

Seen from the perspective of those devoted to the Peace Corps, the case against Pauken was open and shut. The Peace Corps was established in the first days of the New Frontier, when intelligence operations in general and the CIA in particular had more respectability and cachet than they have since enjoyed. One of the Peace Corps's major struggles in self-definition had been to keep itself free of connections with the spies. From the beginning, it extracted an extraordinary promise of immunity from the intelligence agencies: alone among American organizations operating overseas, it would be protected from all attempts at penetration by the CIA. The policies of the Corps prohibit any former CIA employee from working on its staff or as a volunteer; there is also a ten-year waiting period before anyone who has worked in any intelligence organization can apply for a position with the Peace Corps. For their part, the intelligence agencies reciprocated with a promise not to hire former Peace Corps volunteers.

"The policies were set up knowing that Peace Corps volunteers and staff would be accused of being agents of American intelligence," William Josephson, who was the Peace Corps's general counsel in the early 1960s and now practices law in New York, told the Senate committee considering Pauken's nomination this spring. "We decided